

OPNAV Report Symbol 5750-1
Command Serial Number: XXX
Date Submitted: 31 March 2009

Classification: UNCLASSIFIED//~~FOUO~~

Command Operations Report

1. Command Data

Name of your Command or Organization: AIRBORNE EARLY WARNING
SQUADRON 77

Unit Identification Code (UIC), per the SNDL: 55651

Name and Rank of Commander/Commanding Officer/Officer in Charge:

Last: HARTMAN First: STEVEN M.I.: E Rank: CDR

Date Assumed Command (date format YYYY-MM-DD): 2007-09-22

Mission/Command Employment/Area of Operations: COUNTER NARCO-
TERRORISM AND HOMELAND DEFENSE / CENTAM, SOUTHAM, CONUS

Permanent Location (Home Port for deployable units): NAS JRB NEW
ORLEANS

Immediate Superior In Command:

Operational: COMUSNAVSOUTH

Administrative: TACTICAL SUPPORT WING

Identify your assigned Task Force/Group/Unit name(s) and
mission(s). Include OPLAN(s) and or named operations you
participated in during Task Force assignment (if applicable):
JOINT INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE SOUTH, OPERATION CARIB SHIELD,
OPERATION CAPER FOCUS

Name(s) of Forces, Commands, Ships, Squadrons or Units assigned
or under your operational control (if applicable): N/A

Type and number of Aircraft Assigned and Tail Codes, if applicable: 6 E-2C, AF600-605

Commands, Detachments or Units deployed on board or stationed aboard as tenant activities (as applicable): N/A

Number of Personnel Assigned:

Officers: 50 Enlisted: 33 Civilian: 59 (Northrop-Grumman)

Command Point of Contact (required entry, complete in full):

Name (Rank, First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name): LT Erik Lavoie

Job Title/Office Code: Public Affairs Officer

E-mail (both classified and unclassified, if available): erik.lavoie@navy.mil

Phone number(s): 504-697-9381

Command Mailing Address: 400 Russell Ave, Hangar 4, New Orleans, LA 70143

2. Commander's Assessment

Airborne Early Warning Squadron SEVEN SEVEN (VAW-77) was established in October, 1995 as one of two Navy Reserve Hawkeye Squadrons, and since the 2005 decommission of its sister reserve unit, VAW-78, remains the nation's only reserve E-2C squadron. Nicknamed the "Night Wolves", VAW-77 is one of six squadrons assigned to the Navy Reserve's Tactical Support Wing (TSW). The primary role of the squadron is to support two major missions. The first is to provide Airborne Command, Control and Coordination (ABC3) of our nation's Counter Narco-Terrorism forces in the global war on illegal drugs and terrorism. The second is to provide Homeland Defense support. VAW-77 proved again in 2008 that it can be highly successful in supporting both of these important missions.

In 2008, the Night Wolves deployed in excess of 147 days to Forward Operating Locations (FOL's) El Salvador and Ecuador, and Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen, Puerto Rico. Additionally, the squadron supported fleet and reserve training requirements including a long range missile exercise and a HARM Exercise. Two squadron personnel were also assigned as Individual Augmentees to Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, serving in Afghanistan and Djibouti, Africa.

VAW-77 continued its string of operational successes with the capture of three vessels, one aircraft, 11 arrests and seizure of nearly 7.50 metric tons of cocaine with an estimated street value of over \$133M, and 40 kilograms of Heroin worth \$13.2M. This brings the impressive tally of drugs seized in the AOR to over 56 metric tons with an estimated street value in excess of \$5.9B since 2003. These interdictions included the arrest of 77 suspected Narco-terrorists, the seizure of 20 "go-fast" and logistical support vessels and 12 aircraft.

VAW-77 transferred 180 personnel and six aircraft during the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) move from Naval Air Station (NAS) Atlanta, Georgia, to NAS Joint Reserve Base (JRB) New Orleans, Louisiana. Due to a short lead time, late change hangar assignment at NAS JRB New Orleans, efforts were expedited in design, development, funding, and management of over 13 projects totaling more than \$1.8 Million dollars. Coordination among six agencies, all services and multiple contractors, ensured all aspects of the overall 12 month project were completed within scope and two months ahead of schedule.

Key contributors to the squadron's success for the year were adequate funding and aircraft availability. The extremely talented Northrop Grumman contract maintenance team consistently provided mission capable aircraft during every detachment, resulting in a sortie completion rate in excess of 98 percent. One challenge to operations was the shortage of FTS officers in the squadron, especially Naval Flight Officers. Through Active-Reserve Integration, this situation was remedied by incorporation of aircrew from across the fleet, including the FRS, WTU, and NSAWC, to augment the complement of FTS and Reserve aircrew.

3. Chronology and Narrative

Chronology:

- a. JAN08 - FEB08 Counter Narco-terrorism detachment, CGAS Borinquen, Puerto Rico.
- b. APR08 - MAY08 Counter Narco-terrorism detachment, FOL Comalapa, El Salvador
- c. MAY08 HARMEX, NAS MT Mugu, CA
- d. JUL08 - JUL08 Counter Narco-terrorism detachment, FOL Manta, Ecuador.
- e. OCT08 - NOV08 Counter Narco-terrorism detachment, FOL Manta, Ecuador.

Narrative:

In 2008 VAW-77 flew 727 sorties for a total of 2312.5 mishap free flight hours. In addition to its primary mission of Counter Narco-Terrorism, it also provided support to air wing exercises and fleet aircrew training.

The first counter-narcotic detachment of the year was the first time VAW-77 deployed to Coast Guard Air Station (CGAS) Borinquen Puerto Rico. The squadron enjoyed a high level of success, detecting and tracking numerous air traffickers, almost on a daily basis. The squadron returned to the Eastern Pacific theater, operating from FOL El Salvador for a single detachment, and operating from Manta, Ecuador for its final two. Throughout this year's detachments VAW-77 proved its flexibility and resourcefulness, working with myriad US agencies and law enforcement or militaries from El Salvador, Colombia, the Netherlands, France and England.

In the midst of planning and executing CNT detachments and aircraft transfers and modifications, VAW-77 provided invaluable range safety and airspace control during the TSW HARMEX in Pt. Mugu, CA.

In September 2008 the Night Wolves successfully completed two command-wide hurricane evacuations for Hurricane Gustav and Hurricane IKE. Hurricane Gustav was responsible for the single largest civilian evacuation in US History. Less than one month after arriving in New Orleans the Night Wolves were faced with preparing for Hurricane Gustav as it set its sights on NAS JRB New Orleans. VAW-77 led the charge in hurricane preparedness by efficiently relocating five squadron aircraft and efficiently evacuating personnel. Cutting edge planning and pre-move preparations resulted in 100 percent accountability of all squadron personnel, civilian maintenance contract personnel, and families less than 24 hours after the call for mandatory evacuations was made. This emphasized the squadron's ability to quickly muster and account for 200 squadron personnel and family members that were displaced from the storm. Ten days later when Hurricane IKE made a turn towards the Gulf of Mexico, VAW-77 again secured personnel and aircraft prior to rapidly and safely returning to normal operations two days after the storm. The ability of the command to complete these evolutions, maintain mission posture, finalize a command BRAC move, complete Hangar 4 renovations three months ahead of schedule, and deploy on time

to Manta, Ecuador, in October 2008 is an amazing feat of teamwork that cannot be overstated!

As the premiere E-2C counter-narcotics experts, VAW-77 authored a completely new chapter to be published in the E-2C Series Tactics Manual. This addition outlines effective E-2C counter-narcotics tactics, techniques and procedures for search and detection of suspect air and surface targets based on the vast corporate knowledge of the Night Wolf aircrew.

The squadron's complement of awards includes a Joint Meritorious Unit award, two Navy Meritorious Unit Commendations, Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation, two Battle "E" awards, six Safety "S" awards, and three Noel Davis trophies.

4. Supporting Reports

- a. Detachment 08-2 End of Action Report
 - b. Detachment 08-3 End of Action Report
 - c. Detachment 08-4 End of Action Report
 - d. Detachment 09-1 End of Action Report
 - e. HARMEX End of Action Report
-

5. Published Documents

- a. Unconventional Aviators, Tail Hook Spring 2008.
-

6. Photographs

S. E. HARTMAN